THE NATURE CONSERVANCY NEWS

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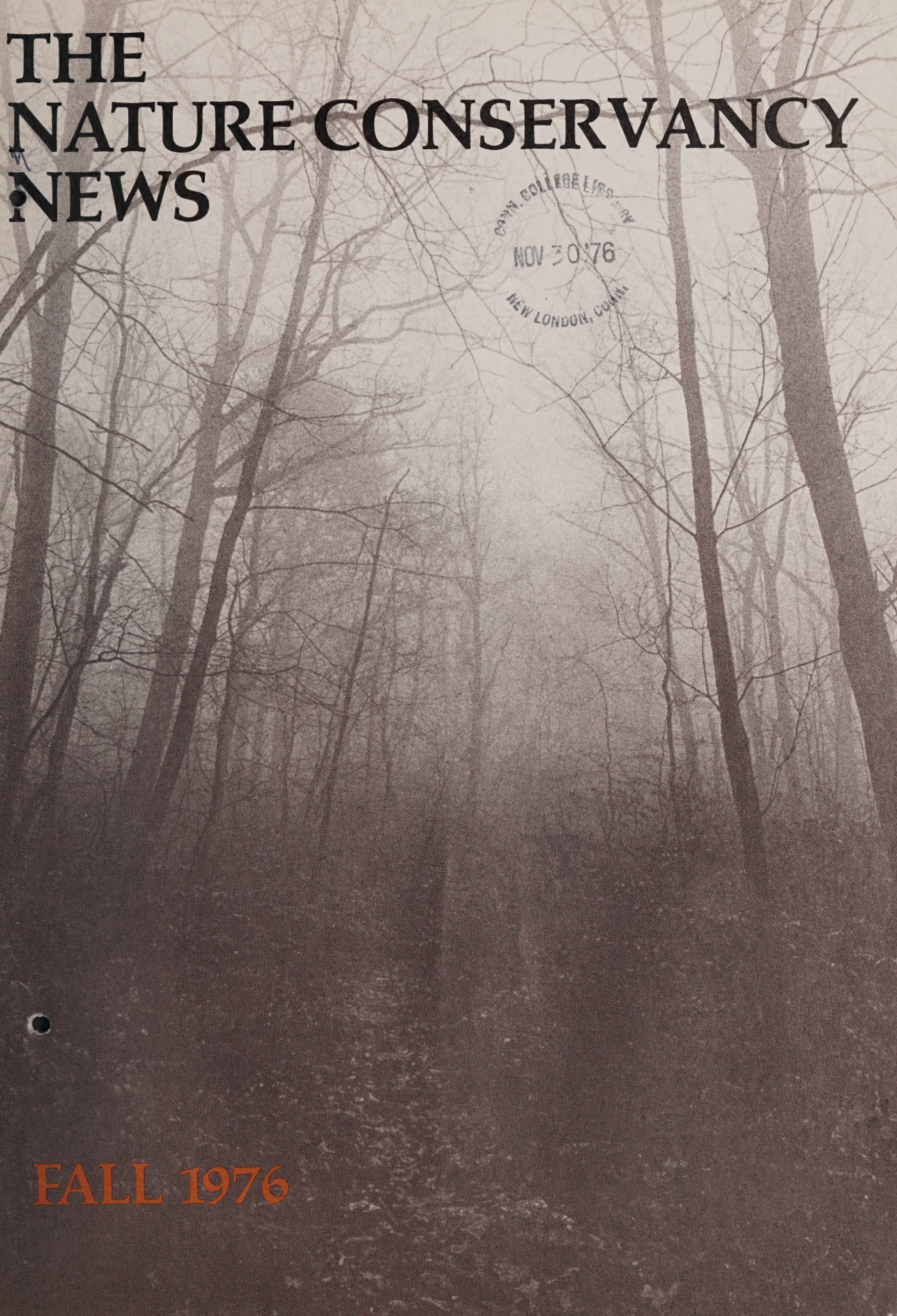

FALL 1976

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SUE DODGE, EDITOR

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COVER PHOTO: Mist-shrouded forest, by Thomas Burke.
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LAND CONSERVATION THROUGH PRIVATE ACTION

The Nature Conservancy is a national conservation organization, receiving its support from the public, whose objective is to preserve and protect ecologically and environmentally significant land and the diversity of life it supports.

To achieve this goal, the Conservancy purchases lands using its revolving fund which is then replenished through fund raising; accepts gifts of land; retains and provides stewardship for 60% of all projects; works with local, state, and federal governments to identify and protect important natural areas and acquires and manages land in advance of government agencies' ability to do so.

Some 1,064, 266 acres of forests, swamps, marshes, prairies, mountains, beaches, and islands in 1,658 projects throughout the United States have been saved from destruction by the Conservancy since the acquisition of its first preserve in 1954.

A member-governed non-profit organization, The Nature Conservancy was incorporated in 1951 in the District of Columbia for scientific and educational purposes.

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NEW PROJECTS

California

IDA HAINES MURPHY PRESERVE—Addition—(Los Angeles County). 80 acres were purchased for addition to the existing 450-acre preserve in the Santa Monica Mountains near Los Angeles. The tract includes rich riparian flora and is crossed by Cold Creek, a perennial stream. A fundraising drive, with a goal of $52,000, is underway by the Southern California Chapter and the Western Regional Office. Management of the area is the responsibility of the Murphy Project Committee.

SANTA ROSA MOUNTAINS BIGHORN SHEEP PRESERVE—Wagner Addition—(Riverside County). In a cooperative effort with the California State Wildlife Conservation Board and the State Parks Department, the Conservancy purchased 11,459 acres of rugged desert mountain land. The area is prime habitat for the desert peninsular bighorn sheep. See story beginning on page 21.

Colorado

WRIGHT - INGRAHAM PRESERVE (Elbert County). The Conservancy assisted the Wright Ingraham Institute in acquiring a 640-acre tract which is used by the Institute as a field station for integrative studies in natural and man-made systems. A transition between the high plains and foothills, the area contains mixed-grass prairie and a year-round creek.

Connecticut

BURNHAM BROOK—Addition—(Town of East Haddam). A conservation easement on 5 acres of open fields and woodland was donated to the Conservancy by Dr. and Mrs. Philip H. Jordan, Jr. The tract will serve as buffer to the adjacent 119-acre preserve.

ROCK SPRING WILDLIFE REFUGE—Chadbourne Addition—(Town of Scotland). White pine and oak-hickory forest front on the Little River, a prime trout stream, for one mile. The entire property shows effects of glaciation, such as three kettleholes—one of them a sizable pond surrounded by pine—and a number of kame terraces. Purchased by the Connecticut Chapter with funds provided by an anonymous donor, the addition brings the preserve's total acreage to 428. The Chapter will manage the area.

Georgia

ARGENT SWAMP (Effingham County, Ga. and Jackson County, S.C.). The 13,000-acre preserve contains wooded swamp, open water areas, and small creeks bordering both sides of the Savannah

River. During the fall and winter months, up to 10,000 wood ducks use the area for daytime feeding and resting. The swamp, which includes stands of water tupelo and bald cypress, provides prime habitat for marsh and water birds such as ibis, egrets, and herons. Bald eagle, osprey, and American alligator also frequent the area. The Conservancy assigned its option to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which will purchase the tract for addition to Savannah National Wildlife Refuge.

Illinois

BELMONT PRAIRIE (DuPage County). The 10-acre tract consists of wet and mesic prairie, part of which has never been plowed. It is perhaps the last remnant of the high quality prairies which once covered the Valparaiso Moraine in Illinois. A number of rare plant species, including the white lady's slipper and marsh betony (*Pedicularis lanceolata*), are found on the preserve. A partial interest in the tract is a gift of Alfred and Margo DuPree; an additional partial interest was purchased by the Illinois Chapter. Northeastern Illinois University will manage the area.

Indiana

HOOSIER PRAIRIE (Lake County). The largest remaining tract of original prairie in Indiana, the 300-acre property consists of cattail marsh, wetland prairie, dry prairie, and a mosaic of shrubby prairie and oak-prairie savanna. The rich flora of Hoosier Prairie includes over 300 native species of vascular plants, at least 43 of which are rarely found in Indiana. Wildlife includes woodcock, bobolink, marsh hawk, short-eared owl, masked shrew, green snake, meadow jumping mouse, and Ranklin's ground squirrel. The Conservancy assigned its option to the state, and the prairie, a National Natural Landmark, was then purchased by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources for inclusion in the state's nature preserve system.

LITTLE CALUMET MARSH—Langeluttig Tract—(Porter County). The 10-acre tract consists primarily of second-growth upland woods and wetlands along the Little Calumet River. The grasses, sedges, and cattails of the marsh provide breeding and feeding habitat for a variety of waterfowl. Purchased and managed by the Northwest Indiana Conservancy, a project committee of the Indiana Chapter, the property is the first acquisition in a proposed assembly project.

Iowa

SILVERS-SMITH WOODS (Dallas County). A gift of Mr. and Mrs. Cleece Silvers and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Smith, the 20-acre tract encompasses two wooded hills and accompanying ravines draining into the Raccoon River, which crosses the area. The broad upland portion of the ridges contain a mixture of white and red oak, shagbark hickory, ash, bur oak, and basswood, with a rich herbaceous understory. The Iowa Chapter will manage the preserve.

Maine

PETIT MANAN POINT—Addition—(Washington County). Part of one of the largest undeveloped peninsulas along Maine's coast, the 285-acre property is mostly wooded with rocky ledges along the shore. Black ducks, American bitterns, great blue herons, green herons, and osprey are frequently seen on the area. The property, which lies just north of a 1,724-acre tract acquired last year by the Conservancy, will be transferred to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for management as a wildlife refuge.

Maryland

POCOMOKE STATE FOREST (Worcester County). On behalf of the State of Maryland, the Conservancy purchased a key inholding in Pocomoke State Forest. The 54-acre tract, forested with mixed pines and hardwoods, is important as a buffer to the Pocomoke River, which is ranked #3 in the Conservancy's Chesapeake Bay region inventory. The tract will be transferred to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for addition to Pocomoke State Forest.

Michigan

DONAHEY WOODS (Alger County). Purchased in a cooperative effort with the Burt Township Board, the 20-acre tract contains a relict mature hardwood forest, one of the few in the Upper Peninsula. The area's frontage on Lake Superior represents a fine example of glacial beach terraces. Bordered on the west by Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and on the east by township-owned Woodland Park, the preserve provides a protected transition between the two areas. The tract will be transferred to Burt Township and will become an undeveloped part of Woodland Park.

OSBORNE MILL RIVERLAND PRESERVE (Washtenaw County). In a joint effort, the Washtenaw Land Conservancy (acting as a Conservancy project committee) and the Washtenaw Audubon Society purchased 39 acres of wooded floodplain and marsh along both sides of the Huron River. Quail, pheasant, green heron, great blue heron, and a variety of ducks frequent the area. The Washtenaw Land Conservancy will manage the preserve and a $32,000 fundraising drive is underway by both groups.

Minnesota

MINNESOTA PRAIRIE CHICKEN PRESERVE SYSTEM—BLUESTEM PRAIRIE—Addition—(Clay County). The 320-acre addition contains mostly mesic prairie with a good variety of native forbs and grasses, some wet prairie and meadow, as well as dry prairie. Prairie chickens, which inhabit the existing Bluestem Prairie, have established a booming ground on the tract. Now totaling 1,200 acres, Bluestem Prairie provides a true "prairie vista." Management of the area is the responsibility of the Minnesota Chapter with the assistance of nearby universities. A $73,000 fundraising campaign has been launched by the Chapter.

Mississippi

PASCAGOULA HARDWOODS (Jackson and George Counties). As part of its Mississippi Natural Heritage Program, the Conservancy acquired nearly 32,000 acres surrounding the Pascagoula River. See story beginning on page 12.

Montana

MT. HAGGIN (Beaverhead and Deer Lodge Counties). 76,000 acres—119 square miles—of snow-capped mountains, alpine meadows, pine forest, and lush river valleys, including 15 miles of the Continental Divide, were purchased with funds that included a $1 million donation to the Conservancy. The land provides habitat for elk, mountain goats, moose, deer, bighorn sheep, mountain lions, greater sandhill cranes, and the endangered peregrine falcon. 53,000 acres have been transferred to the State of Montana to be managed as a wildlife area. The remainder has been transferred to the U.S. Forest Service to fill in a proposed Wilderness Study Area.

New York

ATLANTIC DOUBLE DUNES—JOHN L. HUTTON AND KATHERINE L. HUTTON MEMORIAL PRESERVE—Addition—(Suffolk County). 3 acres of beach and dunes were donated by William L. and Virginia S. Hutton. The property, managed by the South Fork-Shelter Island Chapter, brings the assembly project to 54 acres. The Atlantic Double Dunes have been given the highest priority rating for National Natural Landmark designation by the National Park Service Atlantic Coastal Plain Theme Study.

GRIFFITH PROPERTY — Addition — (Suffolk County). The 2-acre tract on Penniman's Point consists of mature hardwood forest with some trees estimated to be several hundred years old. A gift of Eleanor B. Griffith, the preserve is to be managed by the Long Island Chapter.

ROBERTSON EASEMENT (Suffolk County). A conservation easement on 58 acres of woodland and open fields was donated to the Conservancy by Charles S. Robertson. The property slopes down to and fronts on Cold Spring Bay, a saltwater harbor. The property is to be transferred by the donor to the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory for use as a research facility.

STUYVESANT WAINWRIGHT MEMORIAL WILDLIFE AREA (Suffolk County). A gift of Louise F. Wainwright, the 15-acre preserve contains both fresh and salt water wetlands, as well as pine and scrub oak woodland. The property, which lies to the west of a 1,000-acre county park, will be managed by the Long Island Chapter.

VIRGINIA SMILEY PRESERVE—Addition—(Ulster County). Part of the eastern portion of Shawangunk Ridge, the 50-acre tract is characterized by conglomerate rock outcroppings, vertical cliffs, and a shallow rocky valley crossed by a year-round stream. The Eastern New York Chapter will manage the area.

Ohio

SAMUEL GROSS MEMORIAL WOODS (Shelby County). A gift of the heirs of Mary Gross Bertsch in memory of Samuel Gross, the 40-acre tract consists of an old-growth stand of oak-basswood

swamp forest, with climax beech-maple forest on higher ground. An intermittent stream meanders through the woods. The Ohio Chapter will transfer the property to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources which will manage the area as a dedicated state nature preserve.

RED BIRD HOLLOW — Addition — (Hamilton County). The 26-acre tract, a gift of Helen C. Black, provides valuable buffer to Red Bird Hollow, a scenic valley in a developing suburban area. The property consists of beech-maple and oak-hickory forest and is crossed by a stream with small waterfalls and pools. Management of the area is the responsibility of the Ohio Chapter.

Oregon

SOUTH SLOUGH—Addition—(Coos County). A conservation easement on 23 acres within the Slough is a gift of Mr. Dieter Kunz. The existing 2,200-acre South Slough Estuarine Sanctuary is a near-pristine estuary which serves as a nursery for anadromous fish (coho, trout, and steelhead) and as a habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl.

South Carolina

ARGENT SWAMP (Jackson County). See listing under Georgia.

DRAYTON HALL (Charleston County). On behalf of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, the Conservancy purchased 82 acres of forest and marshland. The tract, which provides buffer to the adjacent state-owned Drayton Hall Plantation, will be administered by the state as a natural area and historic site.

Virginia

ALGONKIAN REGIONAL PARK (Loudoun County). In cooperation with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, the Conservancy purchased 273 acres of meadow and woodland fronting on the Potomac River. The land is to be included in a proposed 516-acre regional park.

Washington

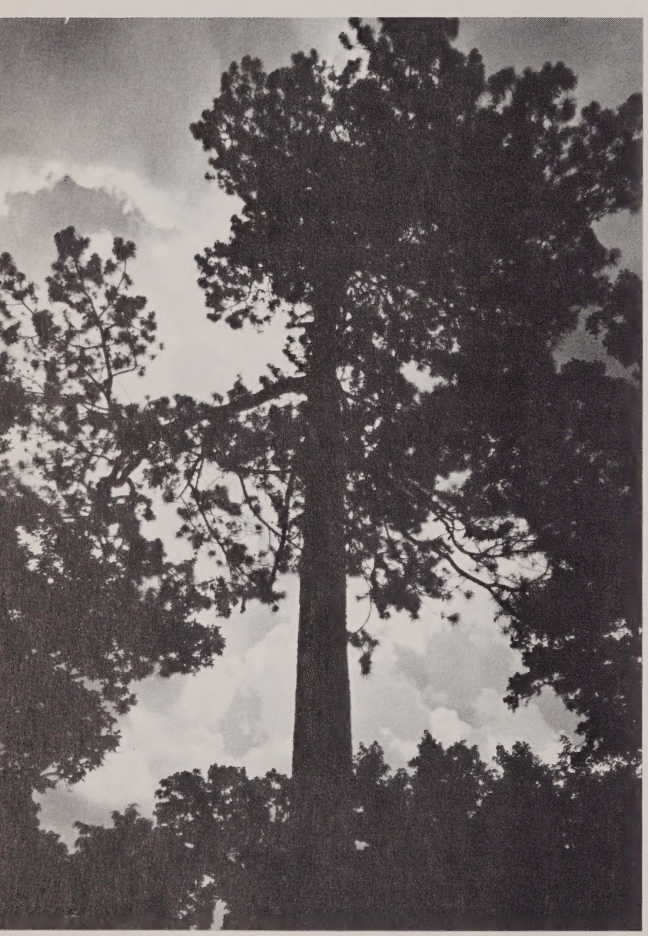
CHASE LAKE BOG NATURAL AREA (Snohomish County). The 7½-acre area is a pristine and self-contained peat bog, situated in the middle of suburban development. It has been used by surrounding schools for over 15 years as an educational site. Acquired on behalf of the Edmonds School District, the bog will be managed by the District as an educational and scientific area.

Wisconsin

BEULAH BOG (Walworth County). The 62-acre preserve features a northern tamarack swamp and an undisturbed bog lake. A quaking mat of sphagnum with many bog shrubs and herbs surrounds the lake. The area has been transferred to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and dedicated as a state Scientific Area.

CEDARBURG BOG—Wright Addition—(Ozaukee County). 50 acres, including a bog with tamarack and white cedar, were purchased by the Wisconsin Chapter. Open fields provide feeding ground for sandhill cranes. The tract, which adjoins the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Field Station, will be transferred to the university for management.

FOUR PROJECTS THAT NEED YOUR HELP



MARSHALL FOREST

By Lois Mauk

For over 100 years, the Marshall family has loved, cared for, and protected its 220-acre forest near Rome, Georgia. In 1962 the Conservancy's Board of Governors commended the Marshalls for their preservation of "one of the best examples of the primeval landscape" in the Southeast. In 1966 Marshall Forest became Georgia's first National Natural Landmark.

Fronting on the Coosa River, the forest contains about 100 acres of virgin timber with shortleaf and loblolly pines of tremendous size. It is perhaps the only virgin forest in the Ridge and Valley Province which extends from Pennsylvania to Alabama. The area also contains a river bank on the Coosa which has not been disturbed by man.

Marshall Forest is particularly interesting for its mix of flora of both northern and southern affinities. Such species as northern red oak and chestnut oak are at their southern terminus in this area, while long-leaf pine—a coastal plain species—is at the inland limits of its range.

Dr. Lewis Lipps of neighboring Shorter College, who did her doctoral dissertation on the unique qualities of Marshall Forest, has worked in close cooperation with MacLean Marshall over the years to insure the proper use and protection of the area. Under her guidance Shorter students have been conducting extensive field research in the protected area. In the last five years, botany and ecology students from the college have created and labeled five 1,000-foot nature trails through the forest. The paths have been used by elementary, secondary, and college students, and by many area garden clubs.

In recent years, MacLean Marshall has been under increasing pressure to sell his family heirloom for construction of subdivisions, roads, power lines, and other trademarks of "progress." Realizing that he could not continue opposing such unrelenting forces alone, Mr. Marshall looked for someone who would devote as much care and attention to his forest as he had—someone who would preserve and protect the natural beauty and wildness of the land. This fall, MacLean Marshall donated the property—reportedly valued at nearly a million dollars—to the Conservancy.

In conjunction with the acceptance of this gift, the Conservancy has established the Marshall Forest Endowment Fund to accumulate funds that will be used to provide needed stewardship of the area and to pay the property taxes on the land in the coming years. The goal is to raise $200,000 in donations by September, 1977. The American Land Trust is lending its support to the Conservancy in the fund-raising campaign.

MacLean Marshall has devoted most of his life to protecting this unique forest. Now he has turned the responsibility over to the Conservancy. With your help, the Conservancy can carry out its commitment to insure the preservation of Marshall Forest for the education and enjoyment of future generations.

ELL POND-LONG POND

By Kathy Crowe

The two pristine lakes lie on either side of steep pink granite cliffs, surrounded by tumbling rocks and tangled vegetation. For wilderness beauty, the Ell Pond-Long Pond complex is unsurpassed in the State of Rhode Island.

The Nature Conservancy was first introduced to this lovely area in 1971 when a significant holding on Ell Pond was offered to The Conservancy at below fair market value. The project had the enthusiastic support of the local Town Council, Conservation Commission, and of Dr. Richard Goodwin, a member of the Conservancy's Board of Governors. The property was purchased in early 1972, and the $1800 fundraising commitment to repay the Project Revolving Fund was completed in 1973. The next year the Conservancy requested and received National Natural Landmark status for Ell Pond.

A second parcel, identified on the Rhode Island Natural Areas Inventory as a high priority for preservation, became available in 1974. The Conservancy and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island joined forces to pursue the acquisition. The owner wished to see the land protected, and again a below fair market value price was negotiated. Once more funds were made available from the Conservancy's Project Revolving Fund. The Conservancy and Audubon are now fundraising to repay the $100,000 loan. With approximately half the funds now identified from major donors, there is an urgent need for contributions of all sizes to match the initial campaign effort.

With the second acquisition, most of the land in the Ell Pond-Long Pond complex is now protected, with two important tracts owned and managed by the State of Rhode Island's Department of Natural Resources.

Ell Pond is a glacial kettlehole surrounded on three sides by red maple-Atlantic white cedar swamp. Cranberry, sundew, Virginia chain fern and pitcher plant are found in the pond's sphagnum bog mat. To the east is an area of swamp containing red maple, swamp azalea, sweet pepperbush, mountain laurel, pitch pine, and hemlock.

The swamp leads to steep granite monadnock cliffs, affording a spectacular view of both ponds. In the upland area is a plant association of gray birch, yellow birch, sassafras, white pine, hemlock, and several species of oak, including chestnut oak. Locally rare sarsaparilla, trailing arbutus and teaberry are also found. The Narrangansett Trail (an offshoot of the Appalachian Trail) winds through the monadnocks, affording some delightful hiking through unspoiled surroundings.

Further east lies Long Pond, a monadnock kettlehole. Large rock outcroppings are surrounded by hemlock with an abundant understory of rhododendron. The pond contains quaking bogs, white cedar swamp, and typical vegetation found in acidic conditions.

The Ell Pond-Long Pond complex provides habitat for a variety of animal life. It is reportedly one of the few areas in southern New England where bobcats are still found. In the drier margin lands lives the pilot black snake, a reptile rare in Rhode Island. Otter and deer are also local residents.

Your contribution towards the completion of the Ell Pond-Long Pond project will enable the Conservancy to secure this critical tract and devote further resources to the preservation of this magnificent wilderness area.

BUFORD MOUNTAIN

By Dianne T. Moffitt

Although most people don't associate mountains with southeast Missouri, the region contains one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world: the Saint Francois Mountains. Within this range, located southwest of St. Louis, is Buford Mountain. At 1,740 feet, it is one of the highest points in Missouri. For a number of miles along state highway 21, a major tourist and recreational artery, Buford Mountain is the outstanding natural feature observed to the east and north. Its forested slopes remain wild and intact, unlike other similar geologic features in Missouri which have undergone massive disturbance.

The most extensive vegetation on Buford Mountain is oak-hickory deciduous forest, which includes a black oak/post oak/white oak community, and a white oak/red oak/shagbark hickory community. The understory is diverse and colorful, consisting of flowering dogwood, redbud, wild plum, serviceberry, rusty black haw, red maple, hawthorne, and farkleberry. The rocky barrens of the mountain support a scrub oak-heath community interspersed with a wide variety of beautiful herbaceous flora.

A seasonal stream supports a plant community characterized most prominently by Ozark witch hazel, but also including Ward's willow, ninebark, swamp dogwood, and shrubby St. John's wort.

Buford Mountain's wildlife populations are diverse and typical of the Ozark region. Species observed include white-tailed deer, wild turkey, turkey vulture, pileated woodpeaker, and a number of species of reptiles and amphibians in their particular breeding habitats. The mountain is also a haven for flocks of wintering birds, which find an abundant food supply in the vegetative understory.

The Missouri Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, under the leadership of Chairman Harrison F. Lyman, Jr., and national board member A. Timon Primm III, has embarked on a project to ensure the preservation of Buford Mountain. The fundraising goal is $150,000. Since this is an ambitious project for the Missouri Chapter, it has been agreed that the option will not be exercised until at least $75,000 has been pledged or is in hand and the remaining funds are in sight.

Buford Mountain's preservation is being supported by noted biologists and ecologists throughout the state of Missouri. The Missouri Department of Conservation has expressed an interest in actively aiding the Missouri Chapter in the stewardship and protection of the preserve. According to John Karel, a scientist with the Department of Conservation, Buford Mountain "has been identified by the State of Missouri as a prime natural area—probably the single most outstanding candidate for natural area preservation of any discrete mountain mass now in private ownership. It combines remarkable geologic, biologic, topographic, aesthetic, and cultural values. Its acquisition and preservation are urgently recommended."

SKAGIT RIVER BALD EAGLE SANCTUARY

By Anne M. Byers

Each year, from mid-November to the end of February, a splendid congregation of eagles appears on the middle expanses of the Skagit River, the westward flowing river that originates in the North Cascade Range and vanishes into Puget Sound in the Mount Vernon area of the state of Washington. The gathering is the largest known wintering population of northern bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus alascensis*) on the West Coast of the continental U.S.

During the winter of 1974-75, an ecologist from the University of Washington's Department of Wildlife and Forest Resources counted up to 160 bald eagles feeding along the Skagit. The variations in numbers of eagles seen from winter to winter are due primarily to the availability of salmon, on which the eagles feed. However, counts for the last 10-year period indicate that the Skagit population is stable and may even be growing. Ornithologists believe the great birds have been gathering along the river's banks and bars for about 10,000 years.

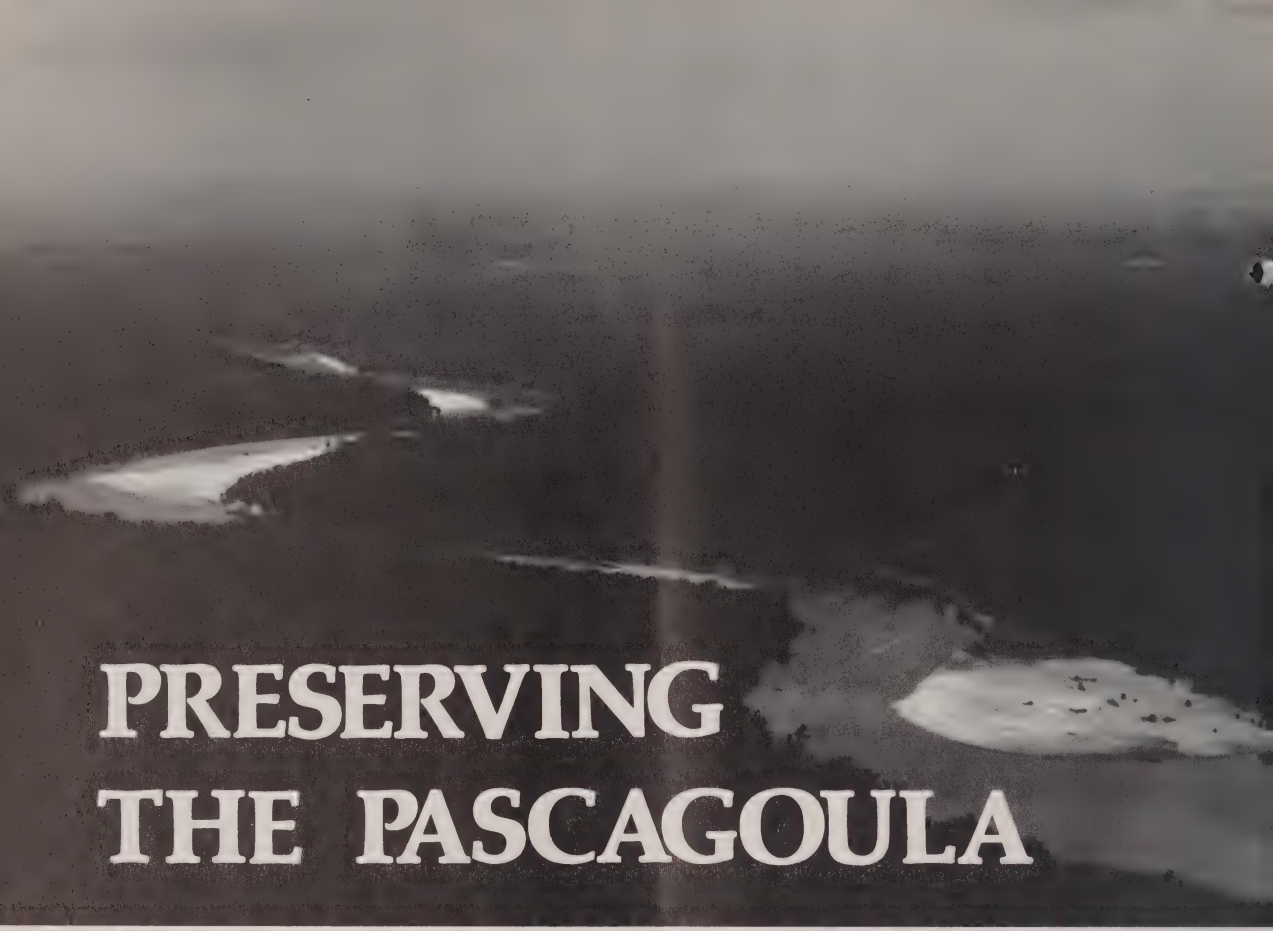
In winter months, the rivers and streams that meander through Washington's forests serve as spawning grounds for salmon and steelhead. After spawning, the fish die. The stretch of the Skagit so crucial to the bald eagle possesses abundant sand bars. The accumulation of salmon carcasses on the bars and at the confluences assures the birds a food source. In addition, the Skagit's banks, the forest, and the islands support the large decidous trees—such as alder, cottonwood, and maples—where eagles like to roost.

Many over-zealous farmers and ranchers still believe that shooting eagles helps protect their livestock, despite recent research indicating that eagles are primarily scavangers and prefer carrion, not live prey. As if this were not a great enough threat to the vanishing birds, the Skagit eagles' food supply and habitat are in danger of being destroyed by logging, water pollution, and construction.

In order to save the eagles, the Conservancy, the Washington State Department of Game, and the Audubon Society are cooperating to create a major eagle wintering refuge around the Skagit River. The sanctuary will eventually encompass between 1,000 and 1,500 acres. To date, the Conservancy has acquired 850 acres, 535 of which have already been transferred to the Department of Game for management. The land was acquired through partial gifts and purchases from rancher Fred Martin and the Simpson Timber Company. An adjacent 193-acre tract, offered to the Conservancy by Scott Paper Company at a price well below its value, is currently under option.

To complete the Skagit River Bald Eagle Natural Wildlife Area, the Conservancy must raise $160,000 by December 22, 1976. The funds are needed to purchase the Scott Paper Company's acreage and additional areas, as well as for management of the refuge.

It is rare that we have the opportunity to make a major contribution to save a threatened species by setting aside a single area. Please send your donations to the Conservancy to create the Skagit River sanctuary. If we do not strive to protect the eagles' habitats, Americans may some day have to travel to Canada for a rare glimpse of their great national symbol.



PRESERVING THE PASCAGOULA

By David E. Morine
Vice President, Land Acquisition

In the fall of 1973 a young man named Graham Wisner wandered into The Nature Conservancy's National Office looking for help. Mr. Wisner told the Conservancy's staff that he was part owner of one of the finest natural areas left in the entire southeast—an area that he very much wanted to see preserved. As he described the land, the Conservancy became more and more interested.

Located in Jackson, George, Jones, and Perry Counties, Mississippi, the property consisted of over 42,000 acres, containing more than 30 miles of the Pascagoula River, about 40 oxbow lakes —called Pascagoula Bayous—and large sections of the Red and Black Creeks, two of the finest clear water streams left in the state. The region is a wilderness abounding in wildlife of every sort.

The bottomlands of the Pascagoula property are dominated by bald cypress, black gum, and sour gum. Some old, hollow cypresses measure 80 inches at breast height. Two threatened pitcher plants and the rare odorless wax myrtle (*Myrica inodora*) are found in the bay area of the river. Higher elevations support umbrella trees (at the limit of their range) and blue needle palms, a threatened species.

Pascagoula's mammals include deer, raccoon, beaver, otter, mink, and muskrat. Panthers (*Felis concolor coryi*) have been sighted by several reliable observers. Green, little blue, and great blue herons, wood ducks, barred owl, pileated woodpecker, prothonotary warbler, and the rare and threatened swallow-tailed kite are only a few of the area's many bird inhabitants. Two rare snakes — the rainbow snake (*Farancia erythrogramma*) and glossy water snake (*Natris rigida*) —have been observed. Other reptiles include bird-voiced tree frogs, green tree frog, red-eared turtle and the rare yellow-blotched sawback turtle. With these credentials, it is no wonder that the property's vast marshland has been recommended as a National Natural Landmark.

The 42,000-acre tract was owned by the Pascagoula Hardwood Company, a closely held family business of which Graham Wisner and over 100 other individuals were stockholders. The Company had not really worked the land for many years; however, now due to the deaths of several major stockholders, the Pascagoula Hardwood Company management came under increasing pressure to either liquidate or actively resume its own timber

operations. Several major timber companies had expressed interest in the land, but Mr. Wisner and some of the other stockholders wanted to see if it would be possible to preserve all or at least some of the land.

The Conservancy was interested but, unfortunately, not too encouraged. Even though initial research indicated that the Pascagoula property was an extremely significant natural area, its fair market value was thought to be in excess of $22 million. Since the Pascagoula Hardwood Company had little or no earnings and most of the stockholders were not in a position to give their stock away, an outright donation to the Conservancy was out of the question. In addition, the Conservancy felt that it had no private or public support within the State of Mississippi. A quick check of the records substantiated this fact. As of 1973, the Conservancy had completed only one small project in Mississippi and had a total membership of four people.

In early 1974, after deciding that it would be impossible to acquire the Pascagoula property, the Conservancy met Avery Wood, the recently appointed Director of the Mississippi Game and Fish Department. Mr. Wood was interested in the Conservancy's land preservation efforts since the greatest flaw he saw in the Game and Fish Department's program was that the Department owned only 22,000 acres of the land it administered. Most of the land used by the Department—about one and a half million acres—was leased on a year-to-year basis from the major timber companies. This lease arrangement had worked well in the past, but it was obvious that Mississippi's rapid growth would change the highest and best use of these lands. Once this change occurred, the companies no longer would be able to lease large blocks of land to the Game and Fish Department. Furthermore, as land use practices were altered, the major timber companies would be forced to transfer their production onto lower priced lands which, in many cases, would be the rivers, ravines, marsh and swamp lands that comprise Mississippi's best remaining natural areas and wildlife habitats.

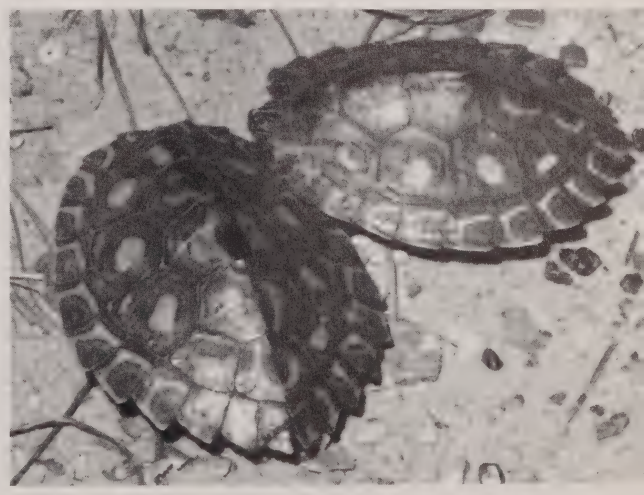
Mr. Wood also felt that outdoor recreation was the single most attractive industry offered by the State of Mississippi. For example, in 1972, out of a total population of 2.1 million people, the state sold over 600,000 hunting and fishing licenses and an additional 500,000 day-user permits. To maintain this volume of business, Mr. Wood was convinced that Mississippi had to acquire a minimum of 175,000 acres of the state's finest wildlife habitats by 1980. The ownership and perpetual management of these lands by the state would serve as a nucleus for an outstanding Game and Fish program that would guarantee future citizens of Mississippi a place to enjoy hunting, fishing, and other forms of outdoor recreation.

Although the Conservancy is not directly concerned with hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation, it was very interested in Mr. Wood's idea of preserving a minimum of 175,000 acres of Mississippi's finest wildlife habitats. In this one major respect, the two objectives were compatible, so the Conservancy agreed to assist the Game and Fish Department in drafting legislation that would create a Mississippi Wildlife Heritage Committee. The primary objective of the Committee would be to create and implement a state-wide comprehensive natural resources program that would guarantee the preservation—through acquisition and other means—of the state's most significant wildlife habitats.

Legislation creating a Mississippi Wildlife Heritage Committee was enacted in May 1974 and the following October, the Committee officially endorsed the Conservancy's efforts to acquire the Pascagoula Hardwood lands for the State of Mississippi. In making this endorsement, the Committee realized that—given the complexity of the transaction and the restrictions placed on the ways in which state government can acquire land—the Conservancy was best qualified to acquire the Pascagoula property. Meanwhile, the Conservancy also had received an endorsement from yet another state agency.

Just after the Heritage Committee was created, the Conservancy entered into a contract with Mississippi's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to undertake a natural area inventory of the entire state.

The Pascagoula River Basin is the only known home of the rare yellow-blotched sawback turtle.



A Chronology of the Pascagoula Transaction

November 1973: The Nature Conservancy recognizes the natural significance of the Pascagoula Hardwood Company's 42,000 acres of land.

May 1974: The Mississippi Legislature creates the Mississippi Wildlife Heritage Committee.

July 1974: The Mississippi Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, with the full endorsement of the Mississippi Wildlife Heritage Committee, contracts with the Conservancy to establish the Mississippi Natural Heritage Program.

October 1974: The Mississippi Natural Heritage Program identifies the Pascagoula Hardwood lands as the single most significant natural area in the State.

May 1975: The Mississippi Legislature appropriates $15 million for the Wildlife Heritage Committee to acquire the Pascagoula property.

November 1975: The Conservancy offers to buy all of the assets of the Pascagoula Hardwood Company for $15 million.

January 1976: The Conservancy's offer to purchase the assets of the Pascagoula Hardwood Company is refused.

February 1976: The Conservancy's Board of Governors approves a tender offer to the stockholders of the Pascagoula Hardwood Company for 75% of the company's stock.

March 1976: The Conservancy makes its tender offer.

May 1976: 75.39% of the Pascagoula Hardwood Company's stock is tendered.

August 1976: The Conservancy buys 75.39% of the Pascagoula Hardwood Company's stock for just over $13 million.

September 1976: The Conservancy and the other stockholders liquidate the Pascagoula Hardwood Company and the Conservancy takes title to approximately 32,000 acres.

October 1976: The Nature Conservancy transfers approximately 32,000 acres of Pascagoula bottomland to the Mississippi Wildlife Heritage Committee.

The inventory is the first phase of the on-going Mississippi Natural Heritage Program. The primary purpose of the Heritage Program's inventory is to provide data on the state's significant natural areas to the Wildlife Heritage Committee and other state agencies. Not surprisingly, the initial data collected through the inventory substantiated the Conservancy's original conviction that the Pascagoula lands comprised the single most important natural area left in Mississippi. With this information in hand, the Conservancy now faced one of its own greatest challenges — implementing the recommendations of the Natural Heritage Program by preserving the Pascagoula Hardwood lands.

Although Mississippi had never before appropriated funds for conservation purposes, the Wildlife Heritage Committee believed there was a slight chance that the state legislature might appropriate some funds to acquire the Pascagoula land. In order to do this, the Conservancy first had to determine if the property were for sale and if so, for how much.

By early 1975 the Conservancy had only succeeded in determining why the company would not sell the land. Because of tax considerations, one family that controlled 25% of the stock would not permit the Pascagoula Hardwood Company to sell the property, nor was it willing to sell its own stock. The family really wanted an exchange of stock, an arrangement in which neither a public body nor a non-profit corporation can participate because they have no stock to exchange. Furthermore, since funds to purchase the land had not been clearly identified, the other stockholders would not make commitments in regard to their stock either. Thus, despite the state's support, preserving the Pascagoula still appeared impossible.

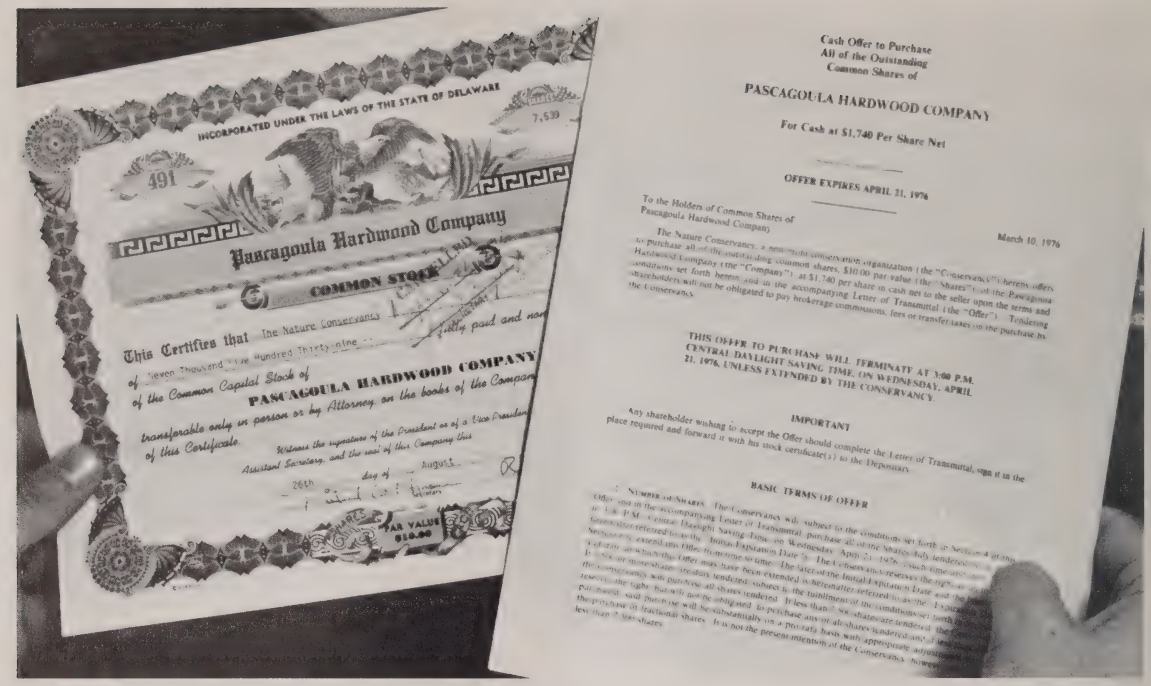
Nevertheless, the Wildlife Heritage Committee decided to push ahead. In April 1975, the Committee introduced a bill in the Mississippi legislature requesting $15 million for acquisition of the Pascagoula lands. Despite low hopes for the bill's passage, it was passed 52-0 in the Senate and 99-14 in the House. Governor William Waller, a strong supporter of conservation in Mississippi, immediately signed the bill into law.

Now that funds were available for the purchase, the Conservancy again met with the major owners of the Pascagoula Hardwood Company. After several months of negotiations, an offer was made to buy all of the assets of the Pascagoula Hardwood Company for $15 million. In January 1976 the company refused the Conservancy's offer and made it quite clear that it was not interested in any cash offers. As far as the state and the Conservancy were concerned, the property was not for sale.

Reliable observers have reported sighting the endangered Florida panther on the Pascagoula lands.

But with the state's moral and financial support, the Conservancy was not to be deterred. It decided to make a new and most unusual offer. At its February 1976 meeting, the Board of Governors approved the issuing of a tender offer (an offer to purchase stock subject to certain conditions) for at least 75% of the Pascagoula Hardwood Company's stock. If the offer were accepted, the Conservancy would buy the stock and vote a liquidation of the company. Dissolving the company would give the Conservancy ownership of one contiguous 32,000-acre tract which contained the 40 oxbow lakes, all of the frontage on the Pascagoula River, and most of the property's significant ecosystems. Acting through the Wildlife Heritage Committee, the Conservancy then hoped to convey the entire tract to the State of Mississippi at the Conservancy's cost.

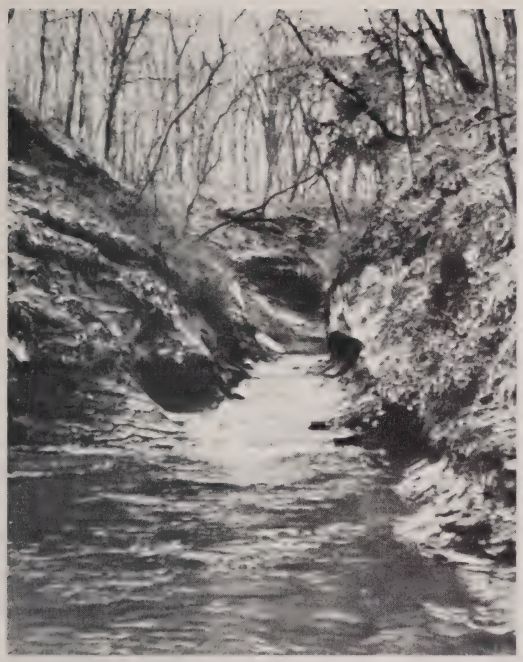
The Conservancy felt that most of the Pascagoula stockholders wanted to see the land preserved and would be willing to sell 75% of the stock for approximately $13 million. In March 1976, the Conservancy made its offer with the support of Pascagoula's management and by mid-May, 75% of the company's stock had in fact been tendered. By the end of August, all of the conditions of the tender offer were met and the Conservancy took control of the Pascagoula Hard-

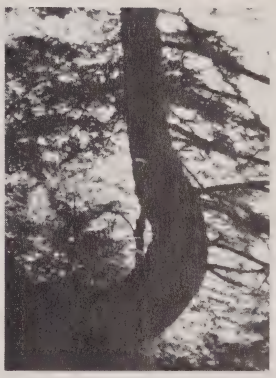


The complex transaction included the issuing of a tender offer—a first in conservation—and resulted in the preservation of the vast wilderness along the Pascagoula River.

wood Company. The company was dissolved and the 32,000-acre tract was transferred to the Conservancy during September. On October 7, 1976—approximately three years after the Conservancy had been introduced to the Pascagoula lands by Graham Wisner—this unique wilderness area was formally transferred by the Conservancy to the State of Mississippi as the first major acquisition of Mississippi's Wildlife Heritage Committee.

The safeguarding of the Pascagoula and its myriad plant and animal species—both common and rare—is in itself a great accomplishment. However, of even greater importance are the additional events brought about by the Pascagoula transactions. In only three years' time, the Mississippi legislature had created the Wildlife Heritage Committee and appropriated funds for land conservation. The Mississippi Bureau of Outdoor Recreation had contracted with the Conservancy to implement a Natural Heritage Program for the state. And most importantly, the Conservancy had proven to itself that it does have the capability to actively identify and preserve this country's most significant natural areas, regardless of the cost or complexity of the transaction. Finally, through the efforts of the Wildlife Heritage Committee and the Mississippi Heritage Program, Mississippi now can continue to identify and preserve its unspoiled wildernesses for the enjoyment and well-being of this generation and future generations of Mississippians.





THE INDIANA CHAPTER:

Growing and Saving Land by Leaps and Bounds

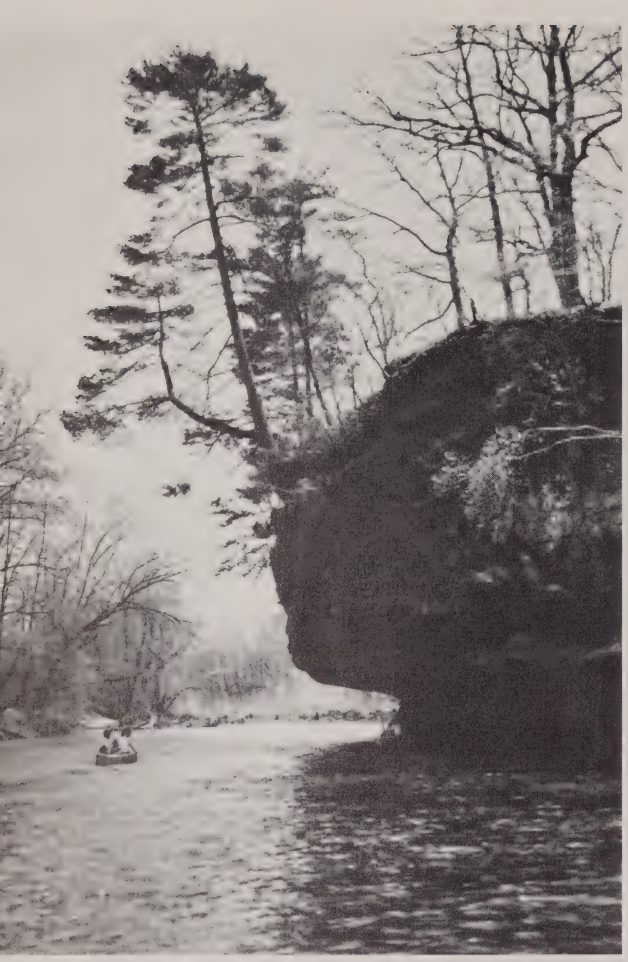
By Dennis Wolkoff, Indiana Field Representative

Although the Conservancy's Indiana Chapter was formed in 1959, it has undertaken more projects and preserved more natural land in the past two years than during its first 15. A unique combination of events stimulated this new level of activity.

In 1974 an experimental Conservancy office was opened in Indiana. It was neither a chapter office nor a regular field office, but rather a joint venture between the Indiana Chapter and the Conservancy's National Office. The "venture" was initially funded by a grant obtained from Lilly Endowment, Inc., and was staffed by a field representative jointly selected by the Chapter and the National Office. For the first time in Indiana the energies of the Chapter's volunteers and the expertise of the Conservancy's national staff were being combined in an attempt to save the state's remaining natural areas.

The first efforts of the new endeavor were devoted to settling long-standing debts on two exceptional Indiana preserves—Orangeville Rise and Fall Creek Gorge. Both projects were unusual because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Soil Conservation Service were attempting to construct reservoirs on each of the two preserves. More unique, however, is that fundraising efforts to pay the debts heightened interest in the on-going legal battles to save the areas, while people involved in the legal efforts also raised funds to settle the debt. Through these combined efforts, the debts were retired within a year and both preserves were spared. Meanwhile, the Indiana Chapter's membership had doubled from 200 to 400 members.

Because of the Chapter's inexperience in fundraising, it had always relied heavily on gifts of land. However, since gifts are simpler to negotiate than purchases, it is easy to acquire poor quality preserves. Fortunately, the Indiana Chapter is spared this dilemma, thanks to a pioneer inventory effort completed in 1969 by Alton Lindsey, and others, called *Natural Areas in Indiana and Their Preservation*. The inventory lists and rates 150 areas throughout the state that are worthy of preservation. The Chapter's policy has always been not to accept gifts if they are not on the list or if



The Conservancy's Fall Creek Gorge preserve would have been flooded if the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had carried out its plan to construct a reservoir there.

they are not generally recognized as being equal in quality to those in the inventory. In addition, the inventory enables the Chapter to pre-identify possible gifts to avoid just reacting to offers.

The knowledge that a tract of land has been recognized as a significant natural area has often encouraged the owner to donate it. Barker Woods, Indian Creek Woods, an addition to Portland Arch, and—recently—Laketon Bog are contained in Lindsey's inventory and have been donated since 1974. All are high quality areas that were owned by people who loved and protected the lands and who were willing and able to give them to the Conservancy.

However, wealth is not always a prerequisite to donating land. An elderly woman, who wore patches on her clothes and cared for stray animals, gave the Conservancy a fine five-acre tract, her most valuable possession. She lived on the property in a tiny 12-foot by 15-foot house with no modern conveniences. When asked why she wanted to give her land away rather than sell it, she answered, "It makes me feel clean to see it preserved."

The same inexperience at large fundraising efforts that encouraged a search for high quality gifts of land also led the Chapter to seek the assistance of other interested organizations and groups. Local chapters of the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society each have raised large sums for state projects. For example, the Indiana Chapter is initiating a joint acquisition with a local Audubon chapter. The Conservancy will buy the land, funds will be raised by both groups, and when the land is paid for the Audubon chapter will take over stewardship of the area.

A similar project, to acquire the Little Blue Stem Prairie, is being undertaken with Indiana State University. It is a joint fundraising campaign to save the last known example of sandhill prairie dominated by bluestem in Indiana. The university will manage the preserve after it is acquired. Other successful cooperative projects have also been completed with ACRES, Inc., a local land preservation group in northeast Indiana.

The Chapter's best known cooperative effort was a Bicentennial project with the 200 Garden Clubs of Indiana. An area was selected that is much as it was 200 years ago, and local Garden Clubs raised funds to help purchase the land. On September 26, the deed was presented to the Governor at the area's dedication as Indiana's Bicentennial Nature Preserve. The project helped the Chapter to double its membership again, from 400 to 800.

Indiana's Department of Natural Resources has a model state nature preserve system through which the state purchases unique natural areas and also protects areas owned by others by dedicating them into the preserve system. Because of the model preserve system and the Conservancy's fine working relationship with the Department, it is sound practice for the Conservancy to deed land to the state. Therefore, trustees of the Indiana Chapter have decided to transfer title to almost half of the Conservancy's projects to the Department of Natural Resources for management under the State Division of Nature Preserves. Both the state's management capacity and the strength of a dedication statute make this an attractive arrangement.

Some individual members of the Indiana Chapter also have worked closely with the state legislature to assure substantial appropriations each year for nature preserve acquisition. Thanks to this cooperation, the Conservancy was able to acquire Indiana's largest remaining, wholly undeveloped lake for the state.

Olin Lake came up for auction in 1975. Unfortunately, the auction was to take place in only

Left: Chapter members remove debris from Fall Creek Gorge. Below: Pine Hills, a National Natural Landmark, was the first project of the Indiana Chapter.

10 days. The state wanted to purchase the area and could appropriate the funds, but even the most efficient governments can't act that quickly. So, on the basis of the state's promise to repay the Conservancy, the Chapter went to the auction. The final price of a quarter of a million dollars was twice what the Conservancy had expected to pay; however, with a fundraising assist from ACRES, Inc., and help from local residents—some made pledges during the auction so that the Chapter could continue to bid—the Conservancy acquired Olin Lake and the state repurchased it in less than six months.

Hoosier Prairie has long been the impossible dream of Conservancy members in Indiana. The 300-acre area, a National Natural Landmark, is the last known significant piece of prairie in an area that was once a huge sea of prairie south of Lake Michigan. Also, it is located on the heavily industrialized south edge of Gary, Indiana. The U.S. Park Service estimated the value of the property at 3 to 4 million dollars, well beyond the reach of even a rejuvenated Indiana Chapter. But three events made the preservation of Hoosier Prairie possible.

First, the Indiana Field Office was able to negotiate a $900,000 purchase price with the prairie's Chicago owner. The Indiana legislature managed to appropriate funds; and, finally, through a coop-

The Indiana Chapter is working with the National Park Service to acquire lands for the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore along Lake Michigan.

erative effort of the Governor, most of the state's congressional delegation, and friends of the Conservancy—who prevailed upon the U.S. Secretary of the Interior—the state received a large grant from the Secretary's contingency fund to pay for one-half of the cost of Hoosier Prairie. The Conservancy has now assigned its option to the state, and Indiana is completing the purchase.

The ability to work with Indiana's state government has also led to contacts at the city and county level. For example, the Conservancy has acquired a 1,000-acre remnant of the once vast Kankakee Swamp. Valued at one million dollars, the property will be resold to Indiana's Lake County for management as a fish and wildlife area.

In addition, new working relationships have been established with the U. S. Forest Service in an effort to protect areas in the Hoosier National Forest. The Conservancy is also cooperating with the National Park Service to create the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Through a special "sub-chapter"—the Northwest Indiana Conservancy—tracts of land are being acquired and held for eventual inclusion in the Lakeshore.

The outstanding activity of the past two years has strengthened the Indiana Chapter's ability to save the state's remaining natural areas and has drawn increased funding from a number of corporate and foundation sponsors. Working with other organizations and groups, and with the state, has increased the Conservancy's effectiveness in Indiana and has illustrated that this is an extremely viable way to preserve land. And although the original inventory still serves the Chapter well, it is hoped that an Indiana Heritage Program will heighten the Conservancy's ability to identify the state's significant natural areas.

Despite all this growth, the basic nature of the Conservancy's Indiana Chapter has not really changed. An energetic Board of 19 members still provides support and encouragement; volunteers still fund-raise to buy land and work many hours to care for preserves. The Chapter still holds two weekend meetings a year; however, the meetings now draw 200 members rather than 50. In addition, the Indiana Chapter is now required to print eight newsletters a year rather than three to keep everyone up to date on its progress.

THE DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP:

Besieged in its Native Land

By Annette Boushey

Illustration by Bob Pratt

In the continental United States, there is perhaps no state that surpasses California for both the variety of native life-forms and the extent to which this natural diversity is threatened. Speaking only in terms of animals, 6 species have become extinct, 4 have been extirpated in the state but are found elsewhere, 26 are endangered, and 23 more are considered rare. A rare species is defined as one that cannot afford any further reduction or degradation of its habitat without becoming endangered.

Among the wildlife that the California Department of Fish and Game lists as rare, one of the most magnificent and hardest to protect is the peninsular bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis cremnobates*). The peninsular bighorns inhabit the desert mountain ranges of southern California and northern Mexico. Along with several other subspecies of bighorn sheep that inhabit the dry mountain ranges of the Southwest and Mexico, they are known collectively as desert bighorns. These magnificent, curly-horned sheep are among the most sensitive to disturbance of all our native mammals. If the impact of civilization reaches into their mountainous domain, the sheep will disappear.

This past summer, The Nature Conservancy purchased more than 17 square miles of natural land in the heart of the most densely populated range of the peninsular bighorns. The property, which is located about 30 miles south of Palm Springs, comprises the largest single acquisition ever made in California by a private conservation group. In September, the area was resold to the state and is now providing the core for a vast new refuge for the rare desert bighorn. The bulk of the land was purchased by the State Department of Fish and Game's Wildlife Conservation Board, and the remainder will go to the Department of Parks and Recreation to be included in Anza-Borrega Desert State Park. Two previously acquired properties in the Santa Rosa Mountains, totaling almost three square miles, have also been resold by the Conservancy to the Wildlife Conservation Board.

A bighorn ewe and her lamb pause on a craggy mountainside.

Ancestors of the present-day desert bighorn sheep are believed to have migrated to this continent across the Bering Straits from Asia. Because they feed on grasses, which are among the first plants to reappear as a glacier recedes, the sheep are believed to have been among the most successful Ice Age mammals.

In recent times, the desert bighorns have not fared so well. They have been subjected to disturbance of their habitat, diversion of their water supply, and poaching. Although the sheep have been protected from hunters by state law since 1873, the shy animals had completely disappeared from northern California by 1920. They are intolerant of even minimal human intrusion. Today they total only an estimated 10 to 20 percent of their former numbers.

If the peninsular bighorns are to survive, vast amounts of land within their natural range must be preserved and protected. Since they are migratory animals, the sheep need—above all else—space to call their own. In the winter and spring months, when the new grasses are moist and plentiful, the rams roam as far as twenty miles from the nearest water supply. The sheep travel in separate ram and ewe bands for most of the year, and gather only during the breeding season, from October to December.

Provided that they have solitude and ample space, the limiting factor on the number of bighorns in southern California is the lack of water. In the dry summer months, the sheep must find water about twice a week, and year-round springs are in short supply. In the Santa Rosa Mountains, which provide the backdrop for Palm Springs and are becoming a popular site for vacation retreats, the springs that do exist are in danger of being boxed in and channeled off for human use. Another source of competition for the scant water supply comes from feral burros, whose numbers have been increasing in the mountain range. In spite of the aggressive courtship battles the rams will wage among themselves, when it comes to confronting other species, the sheep are far from

Almost half of California's desert bighorn sheep population inhabits the dry, rugged Santa Rosa Mountains.

dominant animals. At a water hole, they will give ground to a burro or even to a deer. Careful and knowledgeable management—of the kind that is being provided by the State of California on whatever habitat it has been able to acquire—is critical to the welfare of the desert bighorns.

The Department of Fish and Game estimates that there are a total of 1,100 peninsular bighorns left in California today. About 500, or almost half, of these shy animals inhabit the Santa Rosa Mountains. Protection of their habitat in this rugged mountain range could offer the sheep a good chance to survive.

Unfortunately, development pressures present a serious threat to the value of the Santa Rosas as habitat for the desert bighorns. Although half the land in this mountain range has been owned for many years by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the public land falls into a checker-board pattern that alternates with private holdings. This ownership pattern, resulting from federal land grants to the railroads made during the 19th century, has made it impossible to protect the wildlife habitat.

The State of California's effort to protect the sheep began in 1958, when the first detailed population count was made. Over the years, participants in the annual and semiannual waterhole counts have included the University of California, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the Riverside County Parks Development, and the U.S. Forest Service. All have contributed to the effort to save the bighorn sheep.

The Conservancy's involvement in the project began when Barbara Horton of the Southern California Chapter was contacted by Dr. Loren Lutz of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. Dr. Lutz and Bonnar Blong, Unit Wildlife Manager for the state's Department of Fish and Game, met with Mrs. Horton to discuss the plight of the bighorns and the need for protecting their mountain stronghold. They were especially concerned about Martinez Canyon, an area with abundant year-round springs which lies on the eastern side of the Santa Rosas. Every summer, dense concentrations of sheep come to this canyon for water and to raise their young.

Seven square-mile sections of Martinez Canyon were in private hands, and it was clear to all concerned that swift purchase of the land was essential to protecting the integrity of the canyon as habitat for the sheep. Conservancy volunteers, resi-

To survive, desert bighorns need ample space in which to roam and a year-round water supply. They are intolerant of even minimal human disturbance.

dents of Palm Springs, employees of the Riverside County Parks Department, and friends of the bighorn sheep all pitched in to get the project rolling. The level of concern for the rare animal was exemplified by Santa Ana's Foothill High School graduating class of 1972, which made a special donation of $1,000 to help fund the preliminary studies and appraisals of the land.

By 1974, the Department of Fish and Game's Wildlife Conservation Board was committed to the acquisition of the critical Martinez Canyon lands, but government funds could not be appropriated quickly enough to meet the owner's immediate cash needs. The Conservancy, however, was able to step in and acquire one section of land on only a few weeks' notice. This purchase made it financially possible for the owner to offer the Wildlife Conservation Board an option on the remaining six sections of land, which the Board held until governmental funding was available for the purchase of all seven sections in October, 1975.

Later that same year, the Conservancy was alerted to the need to acquire two additional square miles of land further north in the Santa Rosas, near one of the major highways into Palm Springs. These two sections, which were in imminent danger of being developed, are an important part of the sheep's migration route. Again, the owner was in need of ready cash and the Conservancy was able to buy both sections at a bargain price.

The 17 sections of land most recently acquired by the Conservancy are located between Martinez Canyon and Anza-Borrega Desert State Park, where bighorn sheep are also found. The new acquisition has created a corridor of publicly owned land between the state park and the densely populated canyon, which may allow intermingling between the various bands of sheep.

In all three of these transactions, the checkerboard pattern of ownership in the Santa Rosas worked to the advantage of conservation efforts once the acquisitions were made. The purchase of each square mile of private land consolidated the four square miles of publicly owned, checkerboarded land surrounding it.

The Nature Conservancy's and the Wildlife Conservation Board's acquisition of 26 sections of private land has thus resulted in the protection of two huge blocks of contiguous public land. In addition to these acquisitions, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management will be exchanging land with Southern Pacific Railroad, which will add 11 more contiguous sections.

Altogether, 88 square miles of land bordering Anza-Borrega Desert State Park in the southern half of the Santa Rosas can now be managed as one protected unit. In the northern half of the mountain range, where Wildlife Conservation Board and Bureau of Land Management lands link up with the University of California at Riverside's Deep Canyon Bighorn Sheep Reserve, another 25 square miles are now in public ownership. All of the public agencies involved in the ownership of these lands are coordinating their management. California's Fish and Game Department is using funds from its nongame wildlife program, supported by private donations, to help care for the sheep.

The job of protecting the rare peninsular bighorn sheep, one of this country's truly magnificent wild mammals, is not yet complete. Eventually, the Wildlife Conservation Board hopes to join the state's northern and southern holdings so as to protect the entire range. Thanks to the help of The Nature Conservancy, significant progress has already been made. And perhaps someday the desert bighorns will once again be free to roam in their native land.

The American Land Trust

CHALLENGING A NATION

By Lynn Mohn

"People of all ages have a stake in this land. It's been very good to us. And now you and I have an opportunity to insure that our grandchildren will be able to enjoy it . . . We are a nation that has sought new frontiers. Some believe there are no frontiers left to challenge. In fact, the challenge has never been greater. The emphasis on the Great American Frontier has only changed, from conquest to conservation . . . The American Land Trust is perhaps the greatest effort in our history to invite all Americans to take part in the future of this land . . ."

From *Challenge To A Nation*, narrated by Hugh Downs

Last May, with the unanimous approval of its Executive Committee, the National Council of State Garden Clubs (NCSGC) accepted the challenge to help save our natural land heritage and launched the largest volunteer project it has ever undertaken. The 400,000-member National Council—the largest gardening organization in the world—is now the grassroots arm of the American Land Trust.

Called a "Partnership in Land Conservation," the joint effort will involve every garden club member. Beginning this autumn, 51 state federation-appointed ALT chairmen will be coordinating Trust presentations—complete with the new ALT film, *Challenge To A Nation*, special literature, and often a Trust or Conservancy speaker—at thousands of regional, state, district, and local garden club meetings.

To encourage 100 percent participation, the National Council has instituted an American Land Trust cash awards program. State federations and garden clubs throughout the nation are competing to gain the highest per capita contribution to the Trust and to achieve the greatest overall impact in generating interest and action from the public. The National Council has a nearly 50-year record of conservation activity.

Speaking for NCSGC, Mrs. Vernon L. Conner, President, said, "This is one of the greatest opportunities that we, as garden club members, ever had to stand up and be counted. The preservation of lands of significant ecological or environmental value will strengthen bodies, refresh minds, uplift spirits, enrich leisure, and enhance the 'Designs for Living' of generations to come."

In its two-year Bicentennial campaign to save $200 million-worth of our best remaining natural lands—using the acquisition and stewardship experience of the Conservancy—the American Land Trust has added the following lands to its list of active involvements:

- *Crawford Notch,* New Hampshire (467 acres)—Set in the historic White Mountains are virgin spruce forest and the oldest continuously-used trail in North America. Fund-raising goal: $40,000.
- *Hobe Sound,* Florida (500 acres)—The gift of the Hobe Sound Company protects the endangered Florida manatee and the largest colony of nesting sea turtles in the U.S.
- *St. Johns Ledges,* Connecticut (144 acres)—Donated by The Stanley Works, the mile-long rock formation rises 600 feet above the Housatonic River. The Appalachian Trail traverses the tract.
- *Pilot Knob,* Kentucky (320 acres)—On the geologically and botanically unique area, Daniel Boone climbed the escarpment in 1769 to view central Kentucky. Fund-raising goal: $25,000.
- *Marshall Forest,* Georgia (220 acres)—National Natural Landmark given by MacLean Marshall contains virgin shortleaf and loblolly pine. Fund-raising goal: $200,000 for stewardship.

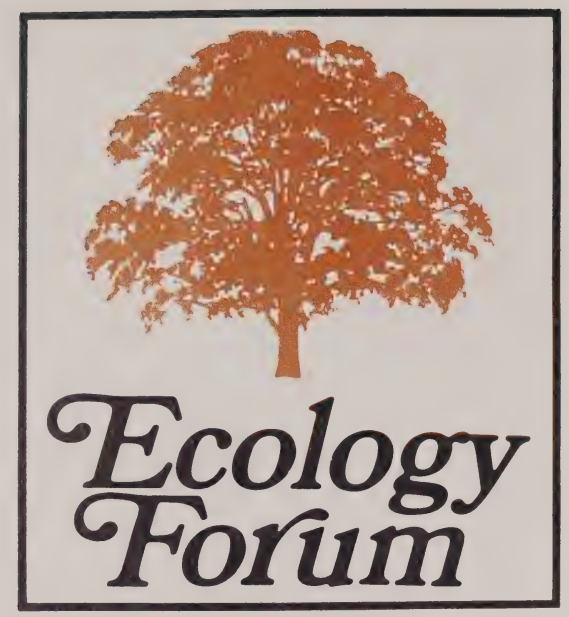
Earlier projects undertaken by the Trust were noted in the Spring and Summer *News*.

While the National Council of State Garden Clubs is seeking support from its ranks and the public, ALT staff members have been talking with leaders in the corporate and philanthropic communities. Contributions of both land and funds to buy and manage land are needed. To date, $500,000 and eight land areas have been donated; another nine areas are being purchased.

Donors of $10 or more to the American Land Trust receive a handsome Honorary Trustee certificate. If not already Conservancy members, they become members for one year and receive *The Nature Conservancy News*. With the holiday season approaching, *News* readers might consider making gifts of Honorary Trusteeships in ALT to conservation-minded friends and relatives. What better gift could anyone wish for than a part in our nation's greatest challenge, saving the land?

Note: Challenge To A Nation, the 17-minute, 16mm color-and-sound film on the American Land Trust, is now available for free loan on request.

Contributions, inquiries, and film requests can be sent to: American Land Trust, P.O. Box 2076, Arlington, Va. 22202. Executive Director: George S. Wills. Phone: (703) 841-5376. Donations are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to The Nature Conservancy.



No. 21

by Bill Shepherd

WALKING WITH AN EYE TO FLYING

An effort to preserve natural areas always has a specific geographic scope and ideally begins with a list of areas located in a given region that are worthy of preservation and have been ranked by their order of importance.

Programs of The Nature Conservancy have been marked in recent years by a focus on priorities. The thinking behind this emphasis has been as follows: "We have only a few years to save all that ever will be saved, and what we can hope to accomplish is severely limited. Let us devote our first efforts to preserving those elements that soon will be lost forever unless we save them now. If any task must remain undone, let it be that which was least important."

To systematize priorities, the Conservancy has established its State Natural Heritage Program, which is based on a conviction that preserving natural diversity is the paramount goal of the natural area movement; and it offers a system of data-organization that is unprecedented and unrivaled in its sophistication.

Through this system, eight states (Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia) now are building highly structured data banks that will give them the desired ability to direct future preservation efforts to the first-priority sites and can assist by a number of other means in the maintenance of environmental quality. Additional states will be adopting compatible State Natural Heritage Programs as time goes by, and the need for a similar priority system that would be national in its scope already has been recognized in several quarters.

The Conservancy is building other components of a nationwide data bank simultaneously with the development of individual state programs. These components will yield information about the resources of sites that are already being preserved. Still, much more work will have to be done before we shall have assembled the desired nationwide information system. Undoubtedly it will take several years.

The importance of uniformity can hardly be overemphasized. While each state rightly wants to preserve good examples of every element of natural diversity that occurs within its borders, it must attach a higher priority to those elements that are endemic to the state than to others that are well represented in preserved areas elsewhere. Numerous reference books are available that give the total range of geographic distribution for a type of plant community, geological feature, plant, or animal; but it is difficult to locate a preserved area that holds a good example of any particular one.

Now for the first time, such information could become available through data-exchange between North Carolina and South Carolina, for example, which are inventorying their respective resources of natural diversity in parallel State Natural Heritage Programs. Similarly, Tennessee's State Natural Heritage Program readily exchanges information with the parallel programs of Mississippi, North Carolina, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. As more and more states can share this capability, our ability to make a case for preserving the top-priority sites will be strengthened commensurately. Furthermore, weighing of natural diversity factors in the environmental impact assessment process under the National Environmental Policy Act is going to be performed more and more with hard statistics. The same hard data can have great value to a representative of the Conservancy who is approaching a landowner about preserving his land. In addition, when the national data system is a reality, we shall be able to supply people who set budgets for federal and state governments the kinds of figures typically required for justifying expenditures of public dollars.

How does all this bear on states that are not yet participating in the Conservancy's State Natural Heritage Program? What should the Conservancy

Bill Shepherd is a Planning Specialist on the staff of the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission.

be doing in such states? How can state programs that have limited financial resources and no formal affiliation with the Conservancy still receive some of the benefits that Heritage states enjoy? How can they prepare for eventual participation in a national information system for perpetuating natural diversity?

The Conservancy's land-acquisition capabilities are going to be concentrated increasingly on tracts of land that contribute significantly to the preservation of diversity. It follows that land will be acquired mostly in those states where it is possible to determine which tracts are the most significant. A Heritage Program can point out the best choices among the less obvious candidate areas and can provide a statistical basis for defending those choices, but the top-priority areas may remain the same ones that were obvious before.

The state natural area programs which share the Conservancy's goals frequently have significant resources to apply. Using selected principles and components of the State Natural Heritage Program, the Conservancy can help these states' current preservation efforts to count for more and at the same time can prepare the way for even better structuring later on.

The requirements for an acceptable program are 1) a commitment to preserving natural diversity, 2) a strategy for public- and private-sector involvement and support, and 3) a classification document or its equivalent. In State Heritage terminology, the classification document is a list of those elements of diversity which that state will actively seek to preserve (on the carefully considered assumption that most other elements of diversity will be preserved incidentally if the program saves the key ones listed in the classification document). Also necessary is some approximation of a managed areas file; Wyoming need not give a high priority to preserving geysers, for example, since many are well protected in Yellowstone National Park. This kind of information should be available, at least through educated inference, for any element before land is acquired to preserve the element.

Classification documents have four major categories: (1) *plant communities,* (2) *aquatic habitats,* (3) *special species* (primarily endangered species of plants and animals), and (4) *other,* which includes geological features.

The national lists of animal species officially listed as threatened or endangered are available from the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Office of Endangered Species of the Fish and Wildlife Service can also supply information on species likely to be considered for listing in the future. A list of plants proposed for listing as *endangered* has appeared in the *Federal Register,* and this list along with another list of plants proposed for *threatened* status is available from the Smithsonian Institution. Additionally, experts in many states have compiled *state* lists of endangered plants and animals, which usually include peripheral forms that are more common outside those states than in them, as well as those that are threatened or endangered wherever found.

State classifications of plant communities are not quite so easily obtained. National systems that have been completed generally do not discriminate finely enough to serve the purpose. State-based systems vary in quality. A state may have a classification system that covers only a part of the state, or it may have two or more conflicting systems. An analysis of a state's physiographic regions usually is available, and this will serve, after a fashion, in the absence of anything better.

A state that has a classification document (CD) or a sufficiently well organized equivalent, should be encouraged to develop an element manual file (EMF). A classification document will almost inevitably be accompanied by an accumulation of knowledge about sources of information concerning the elements of natural diversity in the state and their distribution; if practicable, this knowledge should be organized into a resource catalogue (RC). Central to the purposes of a well founded priority system is a managed areas file (MAF), which contains extensive information about areas already preserved and the significant elements of diversity present in them.

A state that has its significant elements of diversity identified can set up a map file (MF) and the accompanying geographical manual file (GMF) at the cost of a few hundred dollars. Unless so advised by the Conservancy, a state is unlikely to use a set of 7.5-minute topographic maps as a major data-storage device and also is unlikely to store documents related to specific occurrences of elements in files keyed to the topographic maps.

After all this has been done, the major thing left is the computer file. The state that goes so far as to install a computer file of element occurrences probably will *be* a Heritage state. However, a full State Heritage Program involves attention to data cycles, a variety of other procedures to keep the program in balance, and technical support from the Conservancy's national office.

A question which always has to be faced is whether the information that has been gathered is adequate to support a particular decision about priorities for preservation. Here one must rely on the judgment of experts in the appropriate field of natural science. Frequently it is possible to iden-

(continued on page 29)

VOLUNTEER NOTES

MINNESOTA CHAPTER INITIATES LANDMARK MEMBERSHIP

The Minnesota Chapter has created a unique new membership category to support the operations of its Chapter office. Realizing that a full-time staff is indispensible if the Conservancy is to continue preserving the finest of the state's natural areas, the Chapter initiated Landmark Membership. The purpose of the category is to join together 150 Landmark Members who will pledge individual or family contributions of $100 or more per year specifically to finance Chapter operations.

When joining, each new member becomes a part-owner of the Conservancy's "Landmark Preserve," an imaginary tract of land containing numerous natural features: a woodland in the northwest corner, a bog in the northeast, a river and lake, a heron colony, Minnesota trout lilies, a prairie and a prairie chicken booming ground, even a wolf pack. Each Landmark Member owns a "lot" in the "preserve" and receives a title to his or her imaginary tract. Of course, members must agree to leave their "land" in its natural state and not subject it to development! To date, about 65 individuals and families have applied for Landmark Memberships.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS OFFERED

The Conservancy has hundreds of dedicated volunteers who should receive recognition for their efforts in preserving and protecting thousands of acres of natural land. Many of these people may be eligible for one or both of the national environmental awards described below. After reading the criteria for each, please send in your nominations to the appropriate agency. For more information, contact Tamra Peters at the National Office.

Sol Feinstone Environmental Awards

Last year the Conservancy's two nominees for this $1,000 award were both selected as two of the five winners. Procedures for this year's nominations are:

1) An annual award will be made of $1,000 to each of up to five residents of the U.S., who by their voluntary action, and on an unpaid basis, have made an outstanding contribution to improving the physical environment.

2) An Honorary Feinstone Environmental Award, with no cash stipend, may be made to a resident of the U.S. The criterion for the Honorary Award will be outstanding achievement in the improvement of man's environment.

3) Nominations for both Awards must be received on or before December 31, 1976, by the Feinstone Environmental Awards Committee, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, New York 13210.

4) Nominations must be made in writing and endorsed by three additional persons. Nominations must be made on 8½ by 11-inch white paper. A small photo of the nominee may be submitted, but is not required. Other exhibits and/or scrapbooks will be unacceptable.

5) The nominations will be screened by the Feinstone Environmental Awards Committee to a list of finalists which will be submitted to the Awards Directors for final judging.

American Motors Conservation Awards Program

The Conservation Awards program was initiated by American Motors in 1953 to honor individuals and nonprofit organizations for outstanding efforts in conservation of the nation's natural resources. Criteria for this year's awards are:

1) Twenty individual awards will be presented, each consisting of $500 and an engraved bronze plaque. Awards go to 10 professional conservationists employed by nonprofit organizations and to 10 non-professionals, whose conservation efforts are a voluntary expression of good citizenship.

2) Additional awards of $500 each will be made to national and local nonprofit organizations in recognition of achievement in conservation projects.

3) Nominations should be submitted by November 30, 1976 to the American Motors Conservation Award Committee, 27777 Franklin Road, Southfield, Michigan 48034.

4) Endorsements and other supporting evidence of achievement may be included with nominations. Materials should be typewritten or printed. Scrapbooks or similar items should, if possible, be 8½ by 11-inches or file drawer size.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Susan Bournique, p. 16 top; Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game, p. 22; Michael P. Gadomski, pp. 4, 7, inside back cover; Leonard Hall, p. 10; William Hayden, p. 17 lower right; Melvin Horton, p. 24; John Ihley, p. 9; Izaak Walton League, *Outdoor America*, p. 11; Joe Jacob, p. 6 bottom; Kirtley-Perkins Photography, p. 15; Helmut Kohnke, pp. 17 left, 19 top; John Netherton, p. 5; George Svihla, p. 20; Robert Weber, pp. 17 top, 18; William Winburn, *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, p. 8; Bruce Wolfe, p. 23; Susan Wolkoff, p. 19.

OBITUARY OF A GIANT

By George E. Allen, Chairman,
Florida Chapter

Down on Key Largo, northernmost of the Florida Keys, there are sub-tropical wooded areas known as "hammocks." In one of these hammocks stood the finest specimen of West Indian mahogany (*Swietenia mahogani*) in the United States. The tree was 32 inches in diameter at breast height, about 20 feet high up to the first branch, and almost 60 feet tall. Believed to be around 200 years old, it was a true "Bicentennial Tree." The giant was referred to fondly as "The Big Mahogany" and was well known to local Conservancy members who had hoped to preserve it. However, 175 acres of Florida Keys property have a very high price tag, and means of acquiring the land had not been found.

Recently The Big Mahogany fell prey to a chain saw. It was not cut down by the owners, but by "parties unknown." When I first saw the great tree, lying whole amid the crushed smaller trees that had surrounded it, only one small section of a limb had been cut off. The missing piece was only about four and a half feet in length and eight inches in diameter. Why would *anyone* cut down and destroy this magnificent specimen for a small section of limb? No one but the culprit can be certain. However, since there had been some wild orchids growing on the missing branch, acquiring the flowers was probably the "reason."

The Conservancy's Florida Chapter was given the downed tree and succeeded in transporting it to the mainland. The Chapter is now using the mahogany's rare, beautiful wood as the basis for a fund-raising drive. Details are not quite complete; however, the main trunk of the tree has been cut into 2½-inch cross sections and will be sold or given in return for sizable donations. The smaller branches, from 18 inches to 6 inches in diameter, also will be used in various ways to raise funds.

Perhaps, in this way, The Big Mahogany will be remembered, as lovely table tops or lamp bases, or as the tree that helped the Florida Chapter raise funds to preserve some other natural area. Hopefully, the mahogany's demise will prevent the felling of another proud giant.

KENTUCKY CHAPTER RECEIVES FULL CHARTER

On September 4, 1976, the Conservancy's Board of Governors approved a full charter for the Kentucky Chapter. The Chapter has been operating under an interim charter since its formation last fall.

During the interim period, the Chapter more than doubled its membership and published an excellent newsletter. Eleven ecologically significant areas were identified by the Chapter and placed on a list of potential future projects. In addition, the Chapter purchased two preserves—Boone County Cliffs and Pilot Knob—and has launched fund-raising drives for both of these projects.

ECOLOGY FORUM, continued

tify an individual or group that has spent years inventorying some important element of a state's natural diversity. For example, if peregrine falcons nest in the state, the locations of most or all eyries will be known to someone, and every one of them deserves protection. Similarly, if a state has only one large virgin bald cypress swamp, the one remnant will be well known; and if it can be saved today, there is no good reason for postponing the job. On the other hand, many states of the Mountain West have very large virgin forests already preserved. In such states the preservation of additional forest lands perhaps should await a comprehensive inventory. Conversely, some eastern states have no virgin forests left; it may take a comprehensive inventory to determine what is most worth saving among the forests that remain.

While preservation efforts are being directed to the sites which obviously and unquestionably merit first attention, as much as possible should be done to develop the information bank and thus to facilitate confident elaboration of a list of sites for subsequent consideration, ranked in order of priority. In so doing, the purposes of utility, intercommunication, and economy can be served by using the terminology and file structure of the Conservancy's State Natural Heritage Program as models and following them as closely as circumstances permit. In this way, it may be possible a few years hence to knit all the state information system together with minimal need for expensive and time-consuming adjustments.

The land conservation movement can truly take wing when such information becomes available nationwide.

Ways of Giving

LIFE INSURANCE

Last in a four-part series

by L. Gregory Low

People of moderate means can make a substantial contribution to The Nature Conservancy through a gift of life insurance. Such a gift, payable to the Conservancy upon the donor's death, can provide the Conservancy with tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars at relatively modest cost to the donor. An added benefit—as with other techniques for giving—is that the contribution of a life insurance policy can generate significant income tax savings for the donor. Generally, if an individual takes out an insurance policy on his own life and, during his lifetime, transfers that policy to the Conservancy or irrevocably designates the Conservancy as the beneficiary thereof, not only the policy's current cash surrender value but all future premiums paid by him are deductible as charitable contributions.

There are two basic ways you can contribute life insurance to the Conservancy: transfer an existing life insurance policy or purchase a new policy. Here is how each method works.

Suppose you have owned for some time a $50,000 policy on your own life, but no longer need the financial protection because your children are grown and have finished their schooling. If you transfer ownership of such a policy to the Conservancy, you are entitled to a current income tax deduction based on the fair market value of the policy. The gift is deductible in the year of transfer, at least to the extent that it does not exceed 50 percent of your adjusted gross income for that year (with any excess constituting a carryover to future years).

So, if your adjusted gross income is $30,000 a year, and the cash surrender value of the policy is $15,000, you are entitled to deduct the $15,000 during the year of the gift, thereby reducing substantially your income tax liability for that year.

The Conservancy will be pleased to provide any additional details that you require as to the determination of the allowable tax deduction, but it is recommended that tax counsel be consulted before a contribution is made.

A policy may be transferred to the Conservancy whether or not it is fully paid up. If the policy is not paid up, you may continue to pay the annual premiums required to keep the policy in force, with those payments qualifying as tax deductible for each year during which they are made.

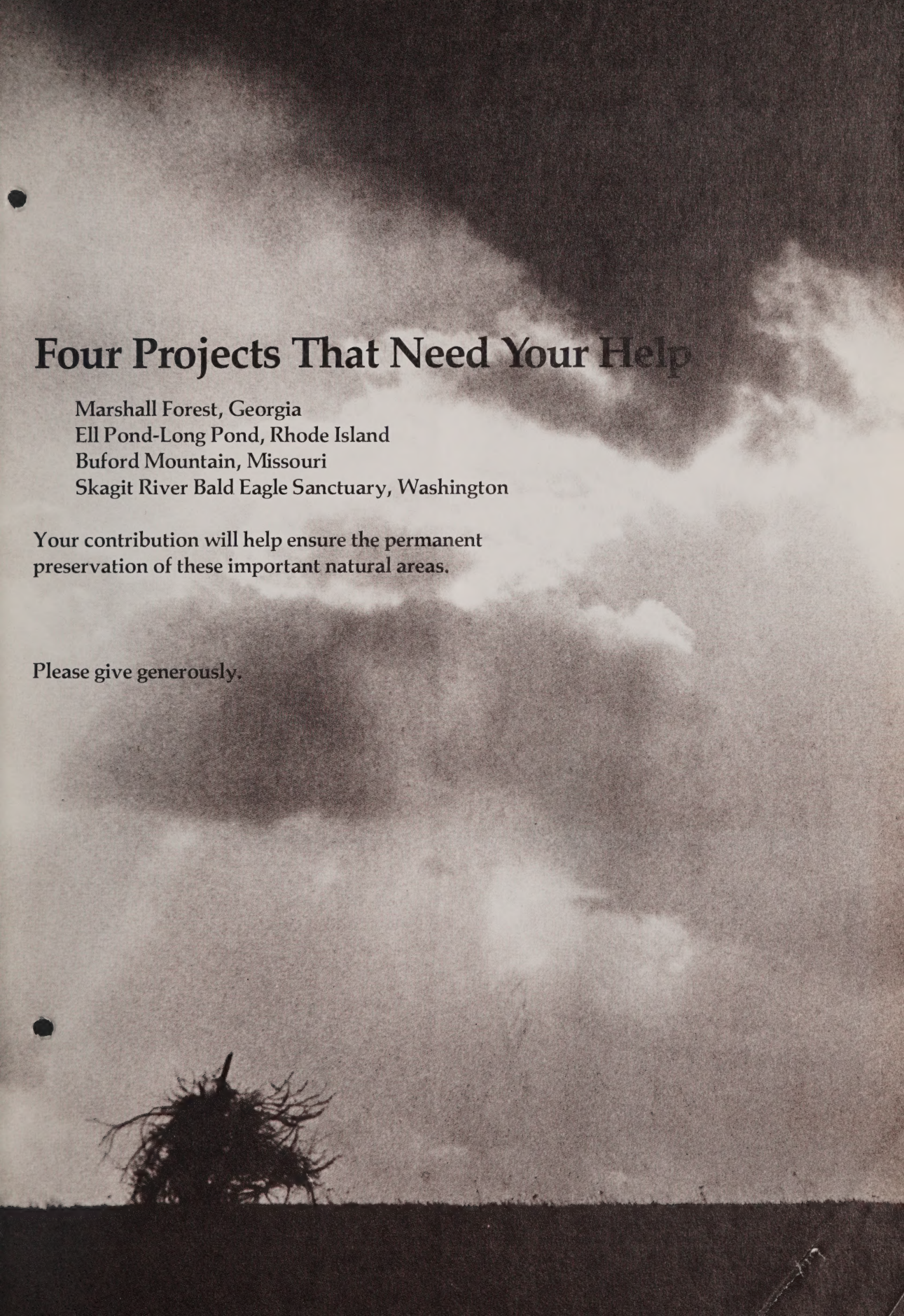
The second method by which you can contribute life insurance is through the purchase of a new policy. Suppose you want to make a large contribution to the Conservancy, but your moderate income does not permit you to make a substantial transfer of cash or other assets. By purchasing a new policy on your life, you can make such a gift and pay only pennies on the dollar.

For example, let's say you purchase a $100,000 life insurance policy and name the Conservancy as both the owner and the beneficiary. Each year thereafter you pay the premium on the policy. You are entitled to an annual charitable deduction for the amount of the premium. Upon your death, the Conservancy, as the beneficiary of the policy, receives $100,000.

As this issue of *The Nature Conservancy News* goes to press, the U.S. Congress has passed and the President has signed into law the Tax Reform Act of 1976. The radical changes in the Internal Revenue Code provisions governing estate taxation make it impossible to provide, at this early date, any meaningful commentary on the consequences of a transfer of a life insurance policy, in which the donor has retained an interest, to the Conservancy. However, because of changes made with respect to the marital deduction, the primary benefit of such a transfer under prior law appears to have been diminished.

Of course, although each case should be viewed in its own light, even under prior law the income tax advantages of lifetime transfers generally were more significant than the estate tax advantages, particularly since "present value" dollars are involved. It may be possible to arrange for *both* income and estate tax savings, but this is relatively complex tax territory, so expert counsel should be obtained.

Regardless of the method used, it is certainly clear that a gift of life insurance can provide you with a unique way to donate a substantial sum—at relatively low cost—to support the Conservancy's continuing work. The Conservancy will be pleased to answer any questions you may have regarding this effective way of giving.



Four Projects That Need Your Help

Marshall Forest, Georgia
Ell Pond-Long Pond, Rhode Island
Buford Mountain, Missouri
Skagit River Bald Eagle Sanctuary, Washington

Your contribution will help ensure the permanent preservation of these important natural areas.

Please give generously.

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